

ePortfolio Journal Assignment 3

Writing My Grounded Theory

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At the beginning of this process, I felt lost and like a complete novice. As I moved through the process, I felt like I gained confidence and momentum, but when it came time to put proverbial pen to paper and articulate my grounded theory research process, I found it difficult to begin. Writing is not where the problem was, it was in my sudden loss of confidence in my grounded theory and where I was at with it. I decided to approach it like I would have approached writing any other writing project or paper, and just work through it section by section. I was hopeful that as I worked through the writing process my ideas would become clearer and more refined.

I initially struggled with when to move on from coding and analysis, as I felt very stuck in a cycle of constant comparison perhaps in part due to the nature of social media data. I felt like I constantly needed to return to the social media platforms to make sure I had not missed anything, as data can appear at any given time. I am hopeful that in my next grounded theory project I will have a better sense of this. I do feel that I did achieve theoretical saturation, as I returned to the data so frequently and did not find anything additional to add to the data set. Once I made the decision to stop returning to the data, I was able to settle into it and sort out my core categories and feel more confident feeling for my emerging theory.

I spent a significant amount of time thinking and reflecting about theoretical coding, and how that process worked within my emerging theory. I considered Glaser's theoretical coding families (Charmaz, 2014) as well as the use of extant theories. As a doctoral student I have spent a considerable amount of time learning about and considering how to use and apply theoretical frameworks, and I am wondering if this was something that I got caught up in as I was working through the grounded theory process. This was a bit of an epiphany for me, as it is very clear that

when using extant theories that they can't be forced (Birks & Mills, 2023), but this is what I was trying to do.

Another interesting piece of working through grounded theory was working without an extensive literature review about the phenomenon of interest before beginning the project. As this is where I generally begin from, it was a unique and almost refreshing place to start. I had some background knowledge in nursing image/nursing identity but have not done any work with social media. This will not be the case in my next grounded theory project, as I will need to conduct a formal literature review to satisfy my doctoral program requirements, but I appreciated the opportunity to do the work in this manner. What I did do was read extensively about grounded theory as a methodology and read different grounded theory projects to become more familiar with the methodology overall.

I found the reflexive nature of grounded theory to be enjoyable, writing the analytic memos was a bit of a growing and learning process and as I reviewed them it was interesting how they changed as the process moved along. They moved between point form and prose, and often involved colours and poorly drawn diagrams. I found the process of writing with a pen and paper to be very integral to my thought process, as it a different feeling then typing. I caught myself frequently needing to add notes into my 'Notes' app on my phone when I was out, or at work or almost asleep and would have a quick thought about what I was working on. I could then get my thoughts out of my head and reflect on them in a more complete way at the next opportunity. The project became quite immersive at this point, and I am almost a bit apprehensive about how all-consuming future research projects may become. I will have to begin always carrying around notebooks for memo-writing for my next grounded theory projects.

Looking to the Future

I have taken this course as an elective course for my doctoral studies at the University of Saskatchewan as I am planning on undertaking a grounded theory study for my dissertation work. I had been looking for a course where I could fully engage with grounded theory as a methodology and work through the process, which I was able to do through this course. What I was surprised by was that I became far more interested in my research topic that I selected for this research project and have uncovered a much bigger research area and need to develop my grounded theory more fulsomely. I was not expecting that, and I am planning to speak with my supervisory committee about potentially modifying my research plans for my dissertation work.

References

Birks, M., & Mills, J. (2023). *Grounded theory: A practical guide* (3rd ed.). SAGE.

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.), SAGE.